



CPED STAFF REPORT

Prepared for the Heritage Preservation Commission

HPC Agenda Item #1
July 22, 2014
BZH-28219

HERITAGE PRESERVATION APPLICATION SUMMARY

Property Location: 1204 Harmon Place, Unit 21
Project Name: Kenosha rooftop deck
Prepared By: [Lisa Steiner](#), City Planner, (612) 673-3950
Applicant: Transform Design
Project Contact: Casimir Semlak
Ward: 7
Neighborhood: Loring Park; adjacent to Downtown West
Request: To construct a rooftop deck addition on a contributing building in the Harmon Place Historic District.

Required Applications:

Certificate of Appropriateness	To allow a rooftop deck addition in the Harmon Place Historic District.
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HISTORIC PROPERTY INFORMATION

Current Name	Kenosha Condos
Historic Name	Kenosha Flats
Historic Address	1204 Harmon Place/ 11 12 th Street
Original Construction Date	1907
Original Architect	Unknown
Original Builder	Charles C. Chase
Original Engineer	Unknown
Historic Use	Apartments
Current Use	Condominiums
Proposed Use	No change

Date Application Deemed Complete	June 11, 2014	Date Extension Letter Sent	Not applicable
End of 60-Day Decision Period	August 10, 2014	End of 120-Day Decision Period	Not applicable

CLASSIFICATION

Local Historic District	Harmon Place Historic District
Period of Significance	1907-1930
Criteria of Significance	Criteria 1: Association with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history Criteria 4: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.
Date of Local Designation	2001
Date of National Register Listing	N/A
Applicable Design Guidelines	Harmon Place Historic District Guidelines and The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

SUMMARY**BACKGROUND.**

In the late 19th century, the area now known as the Harmon Place Historic District was a primarily residential district filled with mansions, townhouses, and residential hotels. Around the turn of the century, downtown retail and commercial growth began to extend to the southwest along Harmon Place, Hennepin Avenue, and other nearby streets. In the early twentieth century, new apartments were constructed that offered one or two bedroom flats intended for the many single people and couples who worked downtown. Only three of the apartment buildings from the period of significance remain: Kenosha Flats (1907), Haverhill Court (1908), and Yale Place (1916). The first automotive businesses opened on Hennepin Avenue and Harmon Place in 1905 and 1907 respectively. After this, the area began to turn more intensively to automotive-related development and by 1920 it was the major automotive district of the city with over one hundred auto-related businesses concentrated in the area.¹

The Kenosha Flats building is a contributing building to the district. It was constructed in 1907 by builder Charles Chase. The four-story building originally housed 26 apartments as well as a basement-level beauty shop and other retail space. The Renaissance Revival style structure is constructed of brown brick with horizontal bands of brick below the second and fourth story windows. Identical round-arched recessed entries are located on both the Harmon Place and 12th Street elevations. The building has a 4-foot deep overhanging cornice with slender corbels. The original apartments have now become condominiums and a restaurant is currently located in the basement-level retail section of the building.

¹ Harmon Place Historic District Designation Study, April 2001, Landscape Research for Minneapolis HPC, pages 1-2.

The building has undergone some interior alterations to the units, but exterior alterations have been primarily limited to the basement-level retail space. Additionally, a rooftop addition was constructed in 1985 at the southwestern corner of the building. The Zoning Board of Adjustment granted a variance for the interior side yard from the required 13 feet to 0 feet to allow the expansion of one of the units to a fifth/mezzanine floor. This greenhouse and deck is still located on the rooftop and is visible from the public right-of-way. The rooftop photos provided by the applicant show this existing structure as well as the oblique aerial photo in the appendix. The Harmon Place Historic District was not designated until 2001, so the Heritage Preservation Commission did not review this addition.

This property is located in the B4N Downtown Neighborhood District and the Harmon Area Overlay District. The Harmon Area Overlay District was adopted in 2001. The maximum height allowed for properties in most of the Harmon Area Overlay District is 4 stories or 56 feet, whichever is less. The subject property is 4 stories with a basement level that does not meet the definition of a story in the zoning code. Enclosed habitable space on the roof of this building would not be allowed without a conditional use permit to increase the maximum height in the overlay district.

APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL.

The applicant is proposing to construct a rooftop deck addition above a top-level unit in the Kenosha building. The deck proposed is approximately 24 feet by 20 feet in size. The deck is planned to be set back approximately 5 feet 6 inches from the Harmon Place and 12th Street South building faces. Additionally, the applicant has noted that the overhanging cornice is approximately 4 feet in depth; this means that the deck is set back approximately 9 feet 6 inches from the furthest edge of the building. Along the Harmon Place and 12th Street sides of the deck, the applicant is proposing a 42-inch high cable railing system. The south and west sides of the deck, which are the interior sides, are proposed to be constructed of cedar screen walls rising a total of 5 feet 5 ½ inches from the existing roof height. The applicant has stated that the cedar screen walls are necessary to provide privacy from the existing adjacent structure on the roof. The decking material is proposed to be composite decking. The deck will be privately accessed through a roof hatch that will require a new penetration through the roof. The applicant originally submitted an application for walls rising to 8 feet but has reduced them by almost 3 feet in response to concerns expressed by CPED staff.

PUBLIC COMMENTS.

Staff has not received any comments on the proposal. Any correspondence received prior to the public meeting will be forwarded on to the Heritage Preservation Commission for consideration.

ANALYSIS

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development has analyzed the application to allow a rooftop deck addition based on the following [findings](#):

1. *The alteration is compatible with and continues to support the criteria of significance and period of significance for which the landmark or historic district was designated.*

The Harmon Place Historic District was designated in 2001 for its association with the early automotive industry and the twentieth-century economy that both evolved at the edge of

downtown Minneapolis. The district was also designated for its embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of automotive buildings which co-existed with distinctive apartment buildings. The apartment buildings in the district were noted to be excellent representatives of an early twentieth-century building type long associated with the Harmon Place and Loring Park area.²

The period of significance identified for the Harmon Place Historic District is 1907-1930. These dates encapsulate the earliest development of auto-related buildings as well as the construction of early twentieth-century apartment buildings such as the Kenosha. The period of significance extends to the waning of construction activity after the 1929 stock market crash.³ The Kenosha, constructed in 1907, is the oldest apartment building remaining in the historic district.

The proposed rooftop deck addition is not compatible with the criteria of significance and period of significance for which the Harmon Place Historic District was designated. Rooftop decks were not historically constructed on early twentieth-century apartment buildings in the area. Only three of these apartment buildings, which were noted as an essential part of the significance of the district, remain. Rooftop additions are not common in the Harmon Place Historic District. Aside from the 1985 addition on the Kenosha building (which was approved prior to district designation), no rooftop decks or additions exist on the remaining apartment buildings in the district. Unlike other districts in the city where industrial or commercial buildings have been converted to residential buildings, apartment buildings in this area would not have historically had rooftop equipment or structures. The proposed rooftop deck does not support the criteria of significance or the period of significance for which the Harmon Place Historic District was designated.

2. *The alteration is compatible with and supports the interior and/or exterior designation in which the property was designated.*

The Kenosha Flats building was identified as a contributing structure in the 2001 designation study of the Harmon Place Historic District. The exterior of the building communicates the building's significance. The significance of the Kenosha building was identified in the designation as one of only four remaining large apartment buildings built in the period between 1907 and 1916.⁴ Currently, only three of these apartment buildings remain in the district. The building was also noted to have good exterior integrity at the time of designation.⁵

The proposed rooftop deck alteration will not be compatible with the exterior designation of the Kenosha building in the Harmon Place Historic District. The proposed deck will have a setback of only approximately 5 feet 6 inches from the building walls, and 9 feet from the edge of the cornice. This building has no parapet to screen the proposed deck and staff finds that there has not been enough evidence provided to ensure that the deck will not be visible from

² Harmon Place Historic District Designation Study, April 2001, pages 1-2.

³ Harmon Place Historic District Designation Study, April 2001, page 2.

⁴ One of the apartment buildings, the Belfont Apartments at 32 12th Street, was described in the designation study but was demolished in 2001. There are only three apartment buildings remaining in the Harmon Place Historic District.

⁵ 1204 Harmon Place Property Description and Significance, Harmon Place Historic District Designation Study, April 2001, pages 37-38.

the public right-of-way as proposed. The cedar screen walls will rise approximately 5 feet 5 ½ inches from the roof. The proposal does not support the exterior designation of the contributing Renaissance Revival building as it would not have historically included any rooftop structures, is one of only three remaining apartment buildings from the period of significance in the district, and will be visible from the public right-of-way.

3. *The alteration is compatible with and will ensure continued integrity of the landmark or historic district for which the district was designated.*

The Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Title 23, Heritage Preservation, Chapter 599 Heritage Preservation Regulations recognizes a property's integrity through seven aspects or qualities: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Based upon the evidence provided below, the proposed alteration will materially impair the significance and integrity of the historic district.

Location: The applicant is not proposing to change the location of the building within the district.

Design: Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. The Kenosha building and other apartment buildings in the Harmon Place Historic District were noted to be significant as well-preserved examples of a common early twentieth-century building type that co-existed with the automotive district. The Kenosha building and other apartment buildings were typically built in the Renaissance Revival style, similar to the common style chosen by architects of the automotive buildings in the area. Renaissance Revival buildings have a strong sense of top, middle, and base, with a flat roof commonly emphasized with an overhanging cornice.⁶ This alteration will negatively impact the integrity of the Renaissance Revival design of the Kenosha building as it will alter the definitive flat roof feature of the building.

Setting: Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. The proposed alteration will not impact the setting of the property.

Materials: Materials are the physical elements that were combined during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. The apartment buildings in the Harmon Place Historic District were typically constructed of brick. The proposal will not impact the brick exterior of the building, but will require penetration of the flat roof. The applicant is proposing to use approximately 4 foot 1 inch tall cedar screen walls on two of the sides of the deck and a wire railing system on the other two sides. The cedar screen walls will rise a total of 5 feet 5 ½ inches above the existing roof.

Workmanship: Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history. The existing integrity of the Kenosha building displays

⁶ Harmon Place Historic District Design Guidelines, page 6.

the workmanship involved in the construction of an early-twentieth century apartment building in a Renaissance Revival style.

Feeling: Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. With the exception of the 1985 addition, the Kenosha building maintains exceptional exterior integrity. Allowing the rooftop deck addition will be detrimental to the integrity of the building. The deck will be visible from the public right-of-way and is proposed to be constructed in a prominent part of the building at the junction of both of the building's primary facades on Harmon Place and 12th Street South. This will have a further detrimental effect on the integrity of the district which is so entwined with the distinctive characteristics of the apartment buildings in the area. The remaining buildings are excellent representatives of the early-twentieth century apartment buildings in the area. Additionally, staff has concerns that this will set a precedent for allowing rooftop decks in the Harmon Place Historic District which are not common today and would not have historically had similar rooftop equipment. If each top-unit apartment were to build a deck above their unit, the feeling of the building would be significantly impacted.

Association: Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. The three apartment buildings remain as important representations of the transition between the area's residential character and automotive district character. The association between this as a rare representative example of the apartment buildings that co-existed with the automotive industry on Harmon Place would be negatively impacted if this rooftop deck addition were approved.

4. *The alteration will not materially impair the significance and integrity of the landmark, historic district or nominated property under interim protection as evidenced by the consistency of alterations with the applicable design guidelines adopted by the commission.*

The *Harmon Place Historic District Design Guidelines* were adopted in 2002. The guidelines do not specifically address rooftop deck additions. However, the *Roofs, Parapets, and Cornices* section of the guidelines provides some guidance for roofs with the following guidelines:

- a. The original roofline including the cornice, parapet, and other elements should be maintained. No part of the cornice or parapet should be covered or removed.
- e. Rooftop equipment that projects above the roofline should be set back from the primary building elevation. It should not be visible from the street level.

Additionally, the *New Construction and Additions* section of the guidelines specifies:

- a. New buildings and additions in the Harmon Place Historic District should be compatible with surrounding buildings and the pedestrian-oriented streetscape.
- b. New buildings and additions should relate to the scale, size, height, massing and materials of existing historic buildings. Acceptable building materials include stone, brick, rusticated concrete block and decorative terra cotta.
- f. Additions to existing historic buildings should not replicate the original but should be designed as a new structure that is compatible with the scale, height, massing, materials and details of the original building.

Staff does not find that the setback proposed will ensure that the rooftop deck is not visible from street level. A rooftop deck would not have been original to the historic building and is not compatible with the scale, height, massing, materials, or details of the original building. The rooftop addition will further mar the distinctive flat roofline of the Kenosha building, a significant feature of Renaissance Revival apartment buildings that was noted in both the guidelines and the designation study as an important feature of the building and the district. The proposed rooftop deck addition will materially impair the significance and integrity of the Kenosha building in the Harmon Place Historic District, as it will not be consistent with the applicable design guidelines for the district.

5. *The alteration will not materially impair the significance and integrity of the landmark, historic district or nominated property under interim protection as evidenced by the consistency of alterations with the recommendations contained in The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.*

The rehabilitation guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* recommend designing additions to roofs such as decks so that they are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining features.

Because the subject building has no parapet, the existing rooftop greenhouse and deck addition are clearly visible from the right-of-way. (See photos provided by staff in appendix.) Staff finds that the proposed deck will similarly be visible from the right-of-way. As shown in the site plan provided by the applicant, the newly proposed deck will come 3 feet closer to the Harmon Place building wall than the existing deck railing on the adjacent unit. The existing rooftop greenhouse and deck are set back 8 feet from the building wall and 12 feet from the edge of the cornice. 12th Street is visible in the photos taken from the rooftop provided by the applicant which, based on the site plan provided, staff estimates to have been taken from approximately 30 feet from the Harmon Place elevation and 10 feet from the 12th Street elevation. Due to the visibility of the existing deck railings which are set further back than the proposed deck and the evidence provided by the rooftop photos, staff finds that the deck would be visible from the public right-of-way. Additionally, the flat roof and strong demarcating line of the overhanging cornice, a significant character-defining feature of the building, would be negatively impacted by the proposed addition of a rooftop deck. The alteration will materially impair the significance and integrity of the Kenosha building within the Harmon Place Historic District due to its inconsistency with *The Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* guidelines for rehabilitation.

6. *The certificate of appropriateness conforms to all applicable regulations of this preservation ordinance and is consistent with the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan and applicable preservation policies in small area plans adopted by the city council.*

The proposal is not consistent with the following applicable comprehensive plan policies:

Preservation Policy 8.1: Preserve, maintain, and designate districts, landmarks, and historic resources which serve as reminders of the city's architecture, history, and culture.

8.1.1 Protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance.

8.1.2 Require new construction in historic districts to be compatible with the historic fabric.

Preservation Policy 8.8: Preserve neighborhood character by preserving the quality of the built environment.

8.8.1 Preserve and maintain the character and quality of residential neighborhoods with regulatory tools such as the zoning code and housing maintenance code.

Additionally, the Loring Park Neighborhood Master Plan was approved by City Council in 2013. One of the five major strategic goals of the plan is to protect, preserve and enhance historic character and unique architecture. The *Protecting Historic Resources* chapter of the plan specifies that properties within the historic district should utilize the adopted Harmon Place Historic District design guidelines to guide design of development. See finding #4 for analysis related to the design guidelines.

7. *Destruction of any property. Before approving a certificate of appropriateness that involves the destruction, in whole or in part, of any landmark, property in an historic district or nominated property under interim protection, the commission shall make findings that the destruction is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property, or that there are no reasonable alternatives to the destruction. In determining whether reasonable alternatives exist, the commission shall consider, but not be limited to, the significance of the property, the integrity of the property and the economic value or usefulness of the existing structure, including its current use, costs of renovation and feasible alternative uses. The commission may delay a final decision for a reasonable period of time to allow parties interested in preserving the property a reasonable opportunity to act to protect it.*

The applicant is not proposing any destruction of property.

Before approving a Certificate of Appropriateness, and based upon the evidence presented in each application submitted, the Commission shall make findings that alterations are proposed in a manner that demonstrates that the Applicant has made adequate consideration of the following documents and regulations:

8. *The description and statement of significance in the original nomination upon which designation of the landmark or historic district was based.*

As discussed in finding #1, the apartment buildings remaining in the Harmon Place Historic District are excellent representatives of an early twentieth-century building type long associated with the Harmon Place and Loring Park area, one which has co-existed with the automotive district for over a century. The proposed alterations do not demonstrate that the applicant has made adequate consideration of the description and statement of significance in the designation of the Harmon Place Historic District. The Kenosha building is a contributing building in the historic district. The alteration will negatively impact one of only three remaining apartment buildings in the historic district. Rooftop structures would not have existed on the early twentieth-century apartment buildings and do not commonly exist in the district today. Therefore, the proposed rooftop deck would be detrimental to the significance and integrity of the district.

9. *Where applicable, adequate consideration of Title 20 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Zoning Code, Chapter 530, Site Plan Review.*

This project would not trigger Site Plan Review.

10. *The typology of treatments delineated in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the associated guidelines for preserving, rehabilitating, reconstructing, and restoring historic buildings.*

As discussed in finding #5, the proposed alteration does not demonstrate that the applicant has made adequate consideration of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. The applicant has not provided enough evidence to ensure that the rooftop deck would be inconspicuous from the public right-of-way. The applicant is not proposing a significant setback from the Harmon Place or 12th Street elevations; in fact, the proposed deck will extend 3 feet closer to Harmon Place than the existing adjacent deck and therefore would be even more visible. Additionally, the flat roof and strong demarcating line of the overhanging cornice, a significant character-defining feature of the building, would be negatively impacted by the proposed addition of a rooftop deck.

Before approving a Certificate of Appropriateness that involves alterations to a property within an historic district, the Commission shall make findings based upon, but not limited to, the following:

11. *The alteration is compatible with and will ensure continued significance and integrity of all contributing properties in the historic district based on the period of significance for which the district was designated.*

Staff is recommending denial of the Certificate of Appropriateness. The alteration will not be compatible with or ensure continued significance and integrity of all contributing properties in the Harmon Place Historic District based on the period of significance of 1907-1930.

12. *Granting the certificate of appropriateness will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will not negatively alter the essential character of the historic district.*

The proposed work will not be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will negatively alter the essential character of the historic district. As discussed in findings #1-10, the proposed rooftop deck addition is not consistent with the designation of the district, the design guidelines for the district, the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, or the city's comprehensive plan.

13. *The certificate of appropriateness will not be injurious to the significance and integrity of other resources in the historic district and will not impede the normal and orderly preservation of surrounding resources as allowed by regulations in the preservation ordinance.*

The certificate of appropriateness will be injurious to the significance and integrity of the Kenosha building and the Harmon Place Historic District. Staff has concerns that this might set a precedent for other buildings in the district where rooftop structures are not common as well as for other top-level units in the Kenosha building. This would impede the normal and orderly preservation of surrounding resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development for the Certificate of Appropriateness:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission adopt the above findings and **deny** the Certificate of Appropriateness to allow a rooftop deck addition to the property at 1204 Harmon Place, Unit 21.

ATTACHMENTS

Materials submitted by staff

1. Zoning map
2. Aerial map
3. 12th Street and Harmon Place façade images
4. Views from 12th Street

Materials submitted by applicant

5. Project description and findings
6. Site plan
7. Plans
8. Building elevations
9. Renderings
10. Photos
11. Materials
12. Street view images of existing structure
13. Correspondence